

IS IT TOO LATE?

by Sally Burgess, Forefront Families LLC

Is it ever too late to become a really great and effective parent? We sometimes get asked that question and our answer is always the same. “No, it is never too late to improve your parenting skills.” Although changing direction becomes more difficult the older the children get, it certainly is not impossible. I applaud parents who seek help when they recognize that their efforts thus far are not working.

You may feel you have lost control of your children. Perhaps they do not respect you or trust your word. Maybe, as parents, one of you is a softy and the other is stern. It could be that you are not supporting one another when it comes to discipline or you are being inconsistent. None of the above is an insurmountable problem. They can all be corrected.

The very question, “Is it too late?” is the first step to becoming the family you want to aspire to and others can love and admire. Instead of beating yourselves up about what you haven’t done or blaming each other for the mistakes you’ve made, just work through these steps and see the difference they make.

Have you got a list of family values you both agree on? Values I consider to be the most crucial are honesty, commitment, forgiveness, trustworthiness, respect, obedience, loyalty and integrity. Place these values in priority order of importance to you. Seriously commit to backing up each other and being consistent in your application of these values. Become a role model by practicing how you want these values to look in your home before you start introducing them to your kids.

Get your family together over pizza and tell them how you want their help to make yours a great family. Create a home that is peaceful and happy, where each person feels important, where each is given equal attention and where all share responsibilities. If your children are in their teens they will be much more likely to be involved if they have input into the plan from the beginning.

Explain the particular value you are introducing as well as what it should look like in your home. Kids need to know exactly what your level of expectation is. Allow training time and give plenty of encouragement for getting it right. Work out your response when your children do not meet the written expectations. Follow through.

When your family learns to respect each other by speaking kindly, when they share in household responsibilities and appreciate one another, home will become a wonderful place to be and fun can be part of the family’s daily regime.

Changed behavior will mean your children will be much happier and they will gain favor among those they interact with.

If you have any comments or questions on this subject, please do not hesitate to contact us at sally@forefrontfamilies.org. We invite you to also check out our website at www.forefrontfamilies.org and our blog site at www.forefrontfamilies.blogspot.com for further assistance.